

CLAIMS

1. A recording medium managing apparatus comprising:

recording medium readout means for reading out
recording information from a first area on a loaded

5 recording medium;

identification information supplying means for
supplying identification information;

recording medium writing means for prohibiting writing
the identification information in a second area on the

10 recording medium when first recording information indicates
that the second area is used for recording and for writing
the identification information in the second area and
writing second recording information indicating that the
second area is used for recording in the first area when the
15 first recording information indicates that the second area
is not used for recording; and

management information storing means for storing
management information linking identification information
recorded in the second area and attribute information for
20 content items of the recording medium recording the
identification information, wherein

the recording medium readout means updates management
information of the management information storing means by
reading out the identification information from the second
25 area and reading out the attribute information from a third

area on the recording medium when the recording information indicates that the second area is used for recording.

2. The recording medium managing apparatus according to
5 Claim 1, wherein,

the identification information supplying means includes
apparatus information storing means for storing apparatus
information unique to the recording medium managing
apparatus and counting means for generating a unique serial
10 number at the recording medium managing apparatus, and
at least part of the identification information
includes the apparatus information and the serial number.

3. The recording medium managing apparatus according to
15 Claim 1, wherein,

the identification information supplying means includes
character string inputting means for inputting a
predetermined character string, and
at least part of the identification information
20 includes the character string input by the character string
inputting means.

4. The recording medium managing apparatus according to
Claim 1, wherein,

25 the third area on the recording medium stores an index

file including the attribute information, and

the recording medium readout means reads out the
attribute information from the index file and updates the
management information of the management information storing
5 means.

5. The recording medium managing apparatus according to
Claim 1, further comprising:

menu generating means for generating a menu displaying
10 the attribute information of content items of the recording
medium on the basis of the management information stored in
the management information storing means.

6. The recording medium managing apparatus according to
15 Claim 5, further comprising:

character string inputting means for inputting a
predetermined character string; and

name conversion information storing means for storing
name conversion information linking the identification
20 information and a character string input by the character
string inputting means, wherein,

the recording medium writing means updates the name
conversion information of the name conversion information
storing means when writing the identification information in
25 the second area, and

the menu generating means displays a character string together with the attribute information, the character string being linked to the identification information of the recording medium by the name conversion information.

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7. The recording medium managing apparatus according to Claim 5, further comprising:

instruction inputting means for assigning the content item to be played using the menu,

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wherein the recording medium readout means reads out the content item if the recording medium storing the assigned content item is loaded.

8. The recording medium managing apparatus according to Claim 7, further comprising:

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network connecting means for communicating with a network connecting another recording medium managing apparatus,

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wherein, if the recording medium storing the assigned content items is not loaded, the recording medium readout means inquires the other recording medium managing apparatus through the network connecting means whether or not the recording medium is loaded and, if the recording medium is loaded into the other recording medium managing apparatus,

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the recording medium readout means requests the transmission

of the assigned content item.

9. The recording medium managing apparatus according to Claim 1, further comprising:

5 content-supplying means for supplying a content item;
 suspended-content-storing means for storing a content
item suspended from being written in a recording medium; and
 suspension information storing means for storing
suspension information linking identification information of
10 a recording medium that is the recording destination of the
suspended content item and attribute information of the
suspended content item,

 wherein, if the recording medium that is the recording
destination of the content item supplied from the content-
15 supplying means is not loaded, the recording medium writing
means stores the supplied content item in the suspended-
content-storing means and updates the suspension information
of the suspension information storing means.

20 10. The recording medium managing apparatus according to
Claim 9, wherein

 the recording medium readout means detects suspension
information including the identification information read
out from the second area from the suspension information
25 storing means, and

the recording medium writing means records the
suspended content item stored in the suspended-content-
storing means on the recording medium on the basis of the
attribute information included in the detected suspension
5 information and updates the management information of the
management information storing means.

11. The recording medium managing apparatus according to
Claim 10, further comprising:

10 network connecting means for communicating with a
network connecting another recording medium managing
apparatus, wherein

the recording medium readout means inquires the other
recording medium managing apparatus through the network
15 connecting means whether or not the other recording medium
managing apparatus stores the suspension information
including the identification information read out from the
second area and, if the suspension information is stored in
the other recording medium managing apparatus, requests the
20 transmission of the suspended content item related to the
suspension information to the other recording medium
managing apparatus, and

the recording medium writing means records the
suspended content item transmitted from the other recording
25 medium managing apparatus or the recording medium and

updates the management information of the management information storing means.

12. A method of managing a recording medium for a
5 recording medium managing apparatus including management information storing means for storing management information linking identification information and attribute information of content items of a recording medium recording the identification information, the method comprising the steps
10 of:

reading out recording information from a first area on a recording medium;

receiving supplied identification information when the recording information indicates that the second area is not
15 used for recording;

writing the supplied identification information in the second area and writing recording information indicating that the second area is used for recording in the first area; and

20 updating the management information of the management information storing means by reading out the identification information from the second area and reading out the attribute information from a third area on the recording medium when the recording information indicates that the
25 second area is used for recording.

13. A method of managing a recording medium for a recording medium managing apparatus including management information storing means for storing management information linking identification information and attribute information of content items of a recording medium recording the identification information, suspended-content-storing means for storing a content item suspended from being written in a recording medium, and suspension information storing means for storing suspension information linking the identification information of a recording medium that is the recording destination of the suspended content item and the attribute information of the suspended content item, the method comprising the steps of:

15 reading out first recording information from a first area on the recording medium;

 receiving supplied identification information when the first recording information indicates that the second area is not used for recording;

20 writing the supplied identification information in the second area and writing second recording information indicating that the second area is used for recording in the first area;

 receiving a instruction for recording a content item on
25 an assigned recording medium; and

storing the content item instructed to be recorded in the suspended-content-storing means and updating the suspension information of the suspension information storing means when the assigned recording medium is not loaded.

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14. The method of managing a recording medium according to Claim 13, the method further comprising the steps of:

reading out the identification information from the second area of a loaded recording medium;

10 detecting the suspension information including the read out identification information from the suspension information storing means; and

recording the suspended content item stored in the suspended-content-storing means on the recording medium on
15 the basis of the attribute information including the detected suspension information and updating the management information of the management information storing means.

15. The method of managing a recording medium according
20 to Claim 13, the method further comprising the steps of:

reading out the identification information from the second area of the loaded recording medium;

inquiring another recording medium management apparatus whether or not the other recording medium management
25 apparatus stores the suspension information including the

identification information read out from the second area;

requesting the transmission of the suspended content item related to the suspension information to the other recording medium management apparatus if the suspension

5 information is stored in the other recording medium management apparatus; and

recording the suspended content item sent from the other recording medium management apparatus on the loaded recording medium and updating the management information of
10 the management information storing means.

16. A program for a recording medium managing apparatus including management information storing means for storing management information linking identification information
15 and attribute information of content items of a recording medium recording the identification information, the program instructing a computer to execute the steps of:

reading out first recording information from a first area on a recording medium;

20 receiving supplied identification information if the first recording information indicates that the second area is not used for recording;

writing the supplied identification information in the second area and writing second recording information

25 indicating that the second area is used for recording in the

first area; and

updating the management information of the management
information storing means by reading out the identification
information from the second area and reading out the

5 attribute information from a third area on the recording
medium when the first recording information indicates that
the second area is used for recording.

17. A program for a recording medium managing apparatus
10 including management information storing means for storing
management information linking identification information
and attribute information of content items of a recording
medium recording the identification information, suspended-
content-storing means for storing a content item suspended
15 from being written in a recording medium, and suspension
information storing means for storing suspension information
linking identification information of a recording medium
that is the recording destination of the suspended content
item and attribute information of the suspended content item,
20 the program instructing a computer to execute the steps of:

reading out first recording information from a first
area on a recording medium;

receiving supplied identification information when the
first recording information indicates that the second area
25 is not used for recording;

writing in the supplied identification information in the second area and writing in second recording information indicating that the second area is used for recording in the first area;

5 receiving an instruction of recording a content item to an assigned recording medium; and

storing the content item instructed to be recorded in the suspended content item storing means and updating the suspension information of the suspension information storing
10 means when the assigned recording medium is not loaded.